

acoustic guitar buying guide

The Ultimate Acoustic Guitar Buying Guide: Finding Your Perfect Instrument

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Introduction:

So you're ready to embark on the exciting journey of buying your first (or next!) acoustic guitar? This comprehensive acoustic guitar buying guide is designed to equip you with the knowledge and understanding necessary to make an informed decision. Navigating the world of acoustic guitars can feel overwhelming, with a vast array of options, brands, and price points. This acoustic guitar buying guide aims to simplify the process, ensuring you find the perfect instrument to match your skill level, musical style, and budget.

1. Understanding Acoustic Guitar Types:

This acoustic guitar buying guide first addresses the diverse range of acoustic guitar styles. Choosing the right type significantly impacts your playing experience and sound. The most common types include:

Dreadnought: The quintessential acoustic guitar shape, known for its powerful bass response and projection. Ideal for strumming and fingerpicking, particularly in larger venues. This acoustic guitar buying guide recommends this shape for beginners due to its versatility.

Grand Auditorium: A versatile shape offering a balanced tone, comfortable to play, and suitable for both fingerstyle and strumming. A popular choice in this acoustic guitar buying guide for its all-around appeal.

Concert: Smaller than a dreadnought, with a warmer, more focused tone. Excellent for fingerstyle players and those who prefer a more intimate sound.

Parlor: The smallest acoustic guitar size, very portable and ideal for beginners or players with smaller hands. Perfect for casual playing and travel.

Grand Concert: A hybrid shape between the concert and grand auditorium, blending the best elements of both.

Your choice will depend heavily on your playing style and preferences. This acoustic guitar buying guide will further help you determine which body size and shape will suit your personal comfort and tonal expectations.

2. Acoustic Guitar Wood Selection: Tonewood Matters

The wood used for the top, back, and sides of your acoustic guitar significantly impacts its tone. This acoustic guitar buying guide highlights the most common tonewoods:

Spruce (Top): A popular choice for its bright, clear tone and excellent projection. Sitka spruce is a common choice in budget and high-end models alike, while Adirondack spruce provides a richer, warmer tone.

Mahogany (Back & Sides): Known for its warm, rich tone with excellent sustain. A great option for both beginners and experienced players.

Rosewood (Back & Sides): Produces a warm, complex tone with excellent resonance. Often found in higher-end guitars due to its cost and beauty.

Sapele (Back & Sides): A more affordable alternative to mahogany, offering a similar warmth and resonance.

This acoustic guitar buying guide emphasizes that understanding the properties of different woods will help you choose a guitar that aligns with your desired sound.

3. Acoustic Guitar Components: Beyond the Wood

This acoustic guitar buying guide moves beyond wood to cover essential components:

Neck: The neck's profile (shape) affects playability. Consider the neck's width and whether it feels comfortable in your hand.

Fretboard: The material (rosewood, ebony, etc.) influences tone and feel. Ebony is typically harder, resulting in a brighter, more articulate sound.

Bridge: The bridge transfers vibrations from the strings to the body, affecting tone and sustain.

Tuners: Reliable tuners are essential for maintaining accurate tuning. High-quality tuners offer smoother operation and better tuning stability.

Electronics (for Electro-Acoustic Guitars): If you need amplification, carefully consider the pickup system and its sound quality. This acoustic guitar buying guide suggests testing different pickup systems before purchasing.

4. Setting Your Budget for Your Acoustic Guitar Buying Guide

This acoustic guitar buying guide recognizes that budget plays a crucial role. Prices range dramatically. Beginner guitars start around \$100, while high-end models can cost thousands.

Budget-Friendly (\$100-\$300): Expect a basic instrument, perfect for learning the fundamentals. While quality may be compromised, these guitars are a great starting point for newcomers.

Mid-Range (\$300-\$800): Offers significantly improved tone, playability, and build quality. A sweet spot for many players in this acoustic guitar buying guide.

High-End (\$800+): These guitars are crafted from premium materials, offering superior tone, playability, and longevity.

This acoustic guitar buying guide suggests setting a realistic budget before you start shopping.

5. Playing and Testing the Guitar

This acoustic guitar buying guide strongly encourages you to play the guitar before purchasing. Pay attention to:

Comfort: Does the guitar feel good in your hands? Is the neck profile comfortable for your playing style?

Sound: Does the guitar produce the tone you're looking for? Listen carefully for clarity, resonance, and balance.

Action (String Height): Too high action makes the guitar difficult to play; too low action may lead to buzzing.

Intonation: Check if the guitar is in tune across the fretboard.

6. Top Acoustic Guitar Brands

This acoustic guitar buying guide covers some well-respected brands:

Taylor: Known for their high-quality craftsmanship and exceptional tone.

Martin: A legendary brand with a long history of producing iconic instruments.

Gibson: Famous for their J-45 and other legendary models.

Seagull: Offers excellent value for the price, with consistently high-quality instruments.

Yamaha: Produces a wide range of acoustic guitars at various price points.

Many other excellent brands exist; this acoustic guitar buying guide suggests research to find brands that align with your needs and preferences.

7. Acoustic Guitar Maintenance

This acoustic guitar buying guide highlights the importance of proper maintenance:

Regular cleaning: Wipe down your guitar after each use.

String changes: Replace your strings regularly (every 2-3 months depending on use).

Humidity control: Extreme humidity can damage your guitar. Use a humidifier or dehumidifier to maintain optimal humidity levels.

Professional setup: Consider a professional setup every 6-12 months to ensure optimal playability.

8. Where to Buy Your Acoustic Guitar

This acoustic guitar buying guide suggests various options:

Local music stores: Allows you to try out guitars and get personalized advice.

Online retailers: Offers a wider selection and often lower prices.

Direct from manufacturers: May offer exclusive deals or custom options.

Conclusion:

Choosing your perfect acoustic guitar is a personal journey. This acoustic guitar buying guide provides the essential information and guidance to make an informed decision. Remember to consider your playing style, budget, and tonal preferences. Take your time, try out different guitars, and don't be afraid to ask questions. The perfect acoustic guitar is out there waiting for you, ready to accompany you on your musical adventures.

FAQs:

1. What is the best acoustic guitar for beginners? A smaller-bodied guitar like a Concert or Parlor is often recommended for beginners due to their comfort and ease of play. Many budget-friendly options are available from reputable brands like Yamaha and Seagull.

1. How much should I spend on my first acoustic guitar? A budget of \$200-\$500 will give you a decent quality instrument to start with.

1. What's the difference between solid-top and laminated-top guitars? Solid-top guitars generally

have a better tone, resonance, and improve with age. Laminated tops are more affordable and durable.

1. How do I know if an acoustic guitar is well-made? Look for even finishes, well-fitted parts, and smooth action. Pay attention to the overall feel and quality of the materials.
1. What is action, and why is it important? Action refers to the height of the strings above the fretboard. Proper action is crucial for comfortable and effortless playing.
1. How often should I change my guitar strings? Aim to change your strings every 2-3 months or whenever they start sounding dull or losing their tone.
1. What type of case or gig bag should I get for my guitar? A hard-shell case offers the best protection, while a gig bag provides lighter protection during transport.
1. What is the difference between a dreadnought and a grand auditorium guitar? Dreadnoughts are larger and produce a louder, bassier tone, while Grand Auditorium guitars offer a more balanced tone and are often more comfortable to play.
1. How can I learn more about acoustic guitar maintenance? Many online resources and tutorials offer guidance on acoustic guitar care and maintenance. Consider consulting with your local guitar shop.

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5. How to Choose the Right Acoustic Guitar Size: A guide to selecting the right guitar body size for your body type and playing style.
6. The Ultimate Guide to Acoustic Guitar Strings: A comprehensive guide to different string materials, gauges, and brands.
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acoustic guitar buying guide: Build Your Own Acoustic Guitar Jonathan Kinkad, 2004 (Book). Every guitarist dreams of owning a handmade instrument, but for most, the cost is likely to be prohibitive. The alternative building your own fine guitar is not as difficult as you might imagine, given some skill, patience, and the expert guidance of a master luthier. Every step of construction is

fully covered, from choice, selection, and preparation of woods, to consideration of size, bracing, and tonal qualities. Each step of the building sequence is clearly photographed in color, with variations to the standard design shown to enable you to personalize your instrument as you make it. Briston, England-based Jonathan Kinhead has been building guitars for nearly 30 years. His craft is born out of experience and intuition rather than a strict following of technical detail. The resulting beauty of form and distinctive tone have earned him his reputation as one of the world's most respected independent luthiers.

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acoustic guitar buying guide: 108 Rock Star Guitars Lisa S. Johnson, 2016-08 (Book). Armed with a macro lens, an incredible eye for detail, and a truly groundbreaking vision, Lisa Johnson's guitar art is taking the world of fine art photography on a rock-and-roll ride. A compilation of Johnson's stunningly personal and intimate portraits, 108 Rock Star Guitars features the guitars of rock-and-roll luminaries, including Les Paul, Eric Clapton, Jimmy Page, Nancy Wilson, Bonnie Raitt, Chrissie Hynde, and many others. Far from still life, Johnson's work conjures the abstract yet also possesses a very sensual and ethereal feel that intentionally illustrates intimate wear-and-tear details. Her unique presentation personifies and captures a musician's true spirit in these musical extensions of the artist's body. This ultra-deluxe, coffee-table photo book reveals through Johnson's signature macrophotography style the etchings, totems, and personal touches of each featured guitar. It is a rare perspective that few people outside of the musicians' stage crew have seen. Alongside these images, Johnson provides personal anecdotes describing her 17-year journey to photograph these iconic instruments, documenting her travels from the backstage hallways of some the world's most famous concert venues to the artists' private homes. 108 Rock Star Guitars is a music and fine-art photography aficionado's private backstage pass to witness up-close these six-stringed works of art.

acoustic guitar buying guide: Acoustic Guitar Design Richard Mark French, 2022-01-03 This book is for experienced luthiers and guitar designers in the industry, novice builders wishing to improve their designs, and guitar owners interested in knowing more about their instruments. It includes the most important technical information gathered from many sources, including the academic literature and the author's own work, presented here in a clear, actionable form with a minimum of mathematics. The book begins with a historical survey on how important features of the acoustic guitar evolved over centuries. The review leads up to a chapter focusing on three iconic instruments that represent the most important types of acoustic guitars: classical, steel string flat top and archtop. As the guitar market is so strongly conditioned by familiar, traditional instruments, a successful builder must have a thorough working understanding of the most important designs to underpin their own work. Through this volume, Professor French lays out the entire design process and collects detailed information in one convenient source. Luthiers quite often compile notebooks of measurements, part numbers, specific design features and other details they routinely need. This book organizes much of that information, with tables of dimensions, material properties, and other details in one essential final chapter. The book also features concise side bar contributions by top guitar designers and builders including Tim Shaw, Chief Engineer at Fender Music; Bob Taylor, Co-Founder of Taylor Guitars; and Andy Powers, Master Guitar Designer and Partner.

acoustic guitar buying guide: Clapton's Guitar Allen St. John, 2005-10-12 New York Times

bestselling author Allen St. John started off looking for the world's greatest guitar, but what he found instead was the world's greatest guitar builder. Living and working in Rugby, Virginia (population 7), retired rural mail carrier Wayne Henderson is a true American original, making America's finest instruments using little more than a pile of good wood and a sharp whittling knife. There's a 10-year waiting list for Henderson's heirloom acoustic guitars—and even a musical legend like Eric Clapton must wait his turn. Partly out of self-interest, St. John prods Henderson into finally building Clapton's guitar, and soon we get to pull up a dusty stool and watch this Stradivari in glue-stained blue jeans work his magic. The story that ensues will captivate you with its portrait of a world where craftsmanship counts more than commerce, and time is measured by old jokes, old-time music, and homemade lemon pies shared by good friends.

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musicality - Collin Bay. Includes access to online video

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acoustic guitar buying guide: *Play Acoustic* Dave Hunter, 2005-07-01 The acoustic guitar is the instrument of the people and Play Acoustic tells the people how to play it. This detailed and beautifully illustrated book explores the history of the acoustic guitar, from the jazz age to the folk revolutions of the early 1960s and late 1990s to the current rebirth of bluegrass and the singer-songwriter boom of the past decade. Skilled professional musicians and experienced tutors coach the reader through 11 styles, using exercises suitable to novice players new to each style and working up to full pieces and advanced techniques. Entire chapters are devoted to folk, rock and pop, blues, country, bluegrass, jazz, and more, with detailed guidance through both musical notation and tablature, diagrams, and explanatory text. Accompanying audio also offers listening examples of the most crucial of these exercises, to help players master each style.

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Carter, 1999 The original version of this guide has sold over 30,000 copies. This new edition has been expanded by 25% and promises to become an invaluable resource. For collectors, dealers and players, this completely updated field guide provides specifications, serial numbers, and more for determining the originality of vintage American acoustic and electric fretted instruments. Detailing thousands of models by every major manufacturer, the book now includes expanded coverage of Martin, Guild, Mosrite, Dobro, Gibson banjos, Fender amps, Gibson amps, plus updates on the latest models from Fender, Gibson, Rickenbacker, and others since 1990.

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acoustic guitar buying guide: Play It Loud Brad Tolinski, Alan di Perna, 2016-10-25 The inspiration for the Play It Loud exhibition at the Metropolitan Museum of Art Every guitar player will want to read this book twice. And even the casual music fan will find a thrilling narrative that weaves together cultural history, musical history, race, politics, business case studies, advertising, and technological discovery. —Daniel Levitin, Wall Street Journal For generations the electric guitar has been an international symbol of freedom, danger, rebellion, and hedonism. In Play It Loud, veteran music journalists Brad Tolinski and Alan di Perna bring the history of this iconic instrument to roaring life. It's a story of inventors and iconoclasts, of scam artists, prodigies, and mythologizers as varied and original as the instruments they spawned. Play It Loud uses twelve landmark guitars—each of them artistic milestones in their own right—to illustrate the conflict and passion the instruments have inspired. It introduces Leo Fender, a man who couldn't play a note but whose innovations helped transform the guitar into the explosive sound machine it is today. Some of the most significant social movements of the twentieth century are indebted to the guitar: It was an essential element in the fight for racial equality in the entertainment industry; a mirror to the rise of the teenager as social force; a linchpin of punk's sound and ethos. And today the guitar has come full circle, with contemporary titans such as Jack White of The White Stripes, Annie Clark (aka St. Vincent), and Dan Auerbach of The Black Keys bringing some of the earliest electric guitar forms back to the limelight. Featuring interviews with Les Paul, Keith Richards, Carlos Santana, Eddie Van Halen, Steve Vai, and dozens more players and creators, Play It Loud is the story of how a band of innovators transformed an idea into a revolution.

acoustic guitar buying guide: How to Setup Your Guitar Like a Pro Jonny Blackwood, 2013-03-12 "Everything you need to start confidently working on your own guitars is right here." Learn how to do great guitar setups time and time again with this easy to follow, step-by-step manual. With expert tips, clear instruction, and over 260 photos, you will gain the understanding of how to fine-tune any guitar to play its best- with measurability and precision! Use the included cut-out tool templates to broaden your skills. Makes an excellent starter book or reference for budding professionals. ***Now updated and expanded with additional content including a section on

restringing, neck shimming, scale length determination and new images! *** Included in the book: An 8-step method for electric, acoustic & bass guitar setups How to adjust neck relief (bow) for optimum playability How to adjust string height for your playing style and guitar type How to file nut slots, adjust pickup height and set the intonation accurately How to adjust Fender-style tremolo's, Gibson hard-tails, Floyd Rose and other floating bridges How to adjust the saddle on your acoustic steel string or nylon string guitar Manufacturer's setup specs for Fender, Gibson, Ibanez, Jackson, Gretsch and others Exclusive setup specifications from the author's best playing guitars & basses Cut-out templates for radius gauges, under-string radius gauges & an action ruler A handy measurement conversion chart & more! From your friends at www.Learn-GuitarSetups.com and the Guitar Setup Pro App. What to expect: If you play electric guitar, acoustic guitar, classical guitar, or even play bass guitar, you can learn guitar set up and maintenance for yourself with this top-selling guitar repair book. After years of successful workshops and group guitar setup classes, led by the Canadian guitar tech & educator Jonny Blackwood, this guitar setup guide has been tweaked and refined to simplistic perfection, in keeping true to the testament that less sometimes is more. After all, there are some excellent in-depth guitar repair luthier books on the market, but that's not what you're after when you just want to lower the string height, adjust the truss rod, and/or set the intonation. This book is written for beginners as an introduction to guitar setup and maintenance, for those who cannot attend our guitar setup classes in person, and for those who want to understand their instrument inside and out. You will learn the methods of true pro guitar setups and the specifications used on numerous styles of guitars. The highlights in this book are simplicity, clear instruction, lots of photographs and lots of examples/ specifications to try on different kinds of guitars. Use this book to gain an edge and develop your skills with a great foundation. Use it for:

- General guitar maintenance
- Electric guitar setups
- Acoustic guitar setups
- Classical guitar setups
- Bass guitar setups

These are some examples of the guitar setup tools you will require to do the procedures outlined in the book:

- guitar capo
- guitar tuner
- guitar setup gauge
- guitar setup ruler
- guitar setup straight edge (optional)
- guitar setup tool kit (optional)
- guitar setup mat (optional)
- under-string radius gauges (optional)

Books available from the author (paperback and digital editions):

- How to Setup Your Guitar Like A Pro: An Easy Guide for Beginners
- How to Build & Setup Guitar Kits like a Pro: An Easy Guide for Bolt-on Neck Guitars
- How to Start and Run a Successful Guitar Repair Business: Practical Tips for the New Entrepreneur

acoustic guitar buying guide: *Light and Shade* Brad Tolinski, 2012-10-23 This "oral autobiography" of Jimmy Page, the intensely private mastermind behind Led Zeppelin—one of the most enduring bands in rock history—is the most complete and revelatory portrait of the legendary guitarist ever published. More than 30 years after disbanding in 1980, Led Zeppelin continues to be celebrated for its artistic achievements, broad musical influence, and commercial success. The band's notorious exploits have been chronicled in bestselling books; yet none of the individual members of the band has penned a memoir nor cooperated to any degree with the press or a biographer. In *Light & Shade*, Jimmy Page, the band's most reticent and inscrutable member, opens up to journalist Brad Tolinski, for the first time exploring his remarkable life and musical journey in great depth and intimate detail. Based on extensive interviews conducted with the guitarist/producer over the past 20 years, *Light & Shade* encompasses Page's entire career, beginning with his early years as England's top session guitarist when he worked with artists ranging from Tom Jones, Shirley Bassey, and Burt Bacharach to the Kinks, The Who, and Eric Clapton. Page speaks frankly about his decadent yet immensely creative years in Led Zeppelin, his synergistic relationships with band members Robert Plant, John Bonham, and John Paul Jones, and his notable post-Zeppelin pursuits. While examining every major track recorded by Zeppelin, including "Stairway to Heaven," "Whole Lotta Love," and "Kashmir," Page reflects on the band's sensational tours, the filming of the concert movie *The Song Remains the Same*, his fascination with the occult, meeting Elvis Presley, and the making of the rock masterpiece *Led Zeppelin IV*, about which he offers a complete behind-the-scenes account. Additionally, the book is peppered with "sidebar" chapters that include conversations between Page and other guitar greats, including his childhood friend Jeff Beck and

hipster icon Jack White. Through Page's own words, *Light and Shade* presents an unprecedented first-person view of one of the most important musicians of our era.

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